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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, October 12, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY." Information from the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Columbus Day!

Our Washington reporter, like Columbus, has been on a voyage of discovery. She's been discovering extension work. And while she didn't cross any oceans, she seems to have gone some distance from her base in the national capital. She says:

"I wonder how many of your listeners are familiar with extension work and the ordinary activities of a home demonstration agent? I've been out to learn something and have come home so filled with impressions and ideas I hardly know where to begin telling about them.

"I could paraphrase with feeling the old proverb about "man works from sun to sun." I'd add that "the home demonstration agent's work is never done." For she's not only a teacher and a group leader,- she's a valuable friend to scores of rural women scattered over her county, and a sort of walking- or driving-encyclopedia to boot, for she's expected to know all the answers!

"We went to day meetings and night meetings. We visited farm homes, 4-H club girls' homes, a horse show, and a local pottery. I met the president of the county federation of clubs in Maryland, and a local leader in Vermont, as well as state and county home demonstration agents and subject matter specialists. We drove anywhere from 30 to 100 miles every day.

"In the county extension office at Elkton, Maryland, the home demonstration agent had a variety of tasks before setting out on her rounds. Then in the field she gave a demonstration at every meeting- an authoritative talk that had required

considerable advance preparation. She answered miscellaneous questions and advised individual club members who had problems. There are 14 community clubs for women in Cecil County. Each meets once a month. The home demonstration agent goes to all the meetings. Then there are 13 girls' 4-H clubs which she meets once a month. Quite a program.

"Let me describe one of the club meetings. The procedure in most of them was similar. All the meetings were held in community buildings like the school or the lodge hall. The club president opened the meeting, and the club music chairman led a song period for 15 minutes. After other club business came the agent's demonstration.

"The major project in Cecil County this year is better family living. The minor theme, which ties in with better family living, is design in small furnishings. During the week of my visit the topic of interest was 'Combination of styles of china and linen.' The agent showed how easy it is to brighten up the appearance of the dining-room at meal time by rearrangement of old dishes or combining them with a few new ones and introducing different pastel colors in both china and linen. She told what could be bought inexpensively and suggested attractive table mats and cloths which women could make for themselves at small cost, suitable with the dishes exhibited. She carried sample plates, cups, and so on, with her, and everyone was much interested in the possible color combinations. Then she distributed a mimeographed summary of the main points she had covered so that each club member had something definite to take home with her and read over.

"Club women in both Maryland and Vermont seemed to be quick to adopt suggestions that strike them as practical. There was a spirit of jollity and good fellowship at all the club meetings. In Vermont, I went to two meetings where a club luncheon preceded the demonstration for the day. One luncheon was a "vitamin A"

meal, intended to supplement the afternoon talk by the home demonstration agent on the cause and prevention of colds. One of the preventive measures stressed was a diet rich in vitamin A. Perhaps you would like to know what that menu was. Salmon creole, muffins, carrots and string beans, sweetpotatoes, pumpkin pie. This meeting was in Addison County.

"That reminds me of a point about extension work in general.. Each fall a list of suggested projects and topics is submitted to the various community clubs, and the farm women themselves vote on what they would like to study. For example, in a community club consisting mostly of young mothers, child development might appeal more than furnishings or food preservation, while a group of older women might prefer clothing construction or garden projects.

"I attended one meeting of a clothing club where there was no home demonstration agent. A local leader gave a demonstration, on plackets, particularly on putting in sliding metal fasteners. She illustrated each point from a portfolio furnished by the state clothing specialist, and passed around mimeographed 'briefletsl at the end of the meeting, just as each home demonstration agent did. Incidentally I learned that you must hold the edge of the material a little loosely as you baste on a sliding fastener. Then it will lie flat.

"I hope I shall have an opportunity some day to see the home demonstration work in other states. Meanting, to all the women who find it helpful and inspiring, my greetings; and to the tireless home demonstration agents, congratulations on a task well-done."

That concludes our Washington letter for this week.